

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS**

Elgin Christopher Bowden,

Plaintiff,

v.

Southwest Credit Systems, L.P.; and DOES 1-
10, inclusive,

Defendants.

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Civil Action No.: 1:13-cv-10253

COMPLAINT

For this Complaint, the Plaintiff, Elgin Christopher Bowden, by undersigned counsel, states as follows:

JURISDICTION

1. This action arises out of Defendants' repeated violations of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692, et seq. ("FDCPA"), violations of the Telephone Consumer Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. § 227, et. seq. ("TCPA"), and the invasions of Plaintiff's personal privacy by the Defendants and its agents in their illegal efforts to collect a consumer debt.

2. Supplemental jurisdiction exists pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367.

3. Venue is proper in this District pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b), in that the Defendants transact business in this District and a substantial portion of the acts giving rise to this action occurred in this District.

PARTIES

4. The Plaintiff, Elgin Christopher Bowden ("Plaintiff"), is an adult individual residing in Lowell, Massachusetts, and is a "consumer" as the term is defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(3) and is a "person" as defined by 47 U.S.C. § 153(10).

5. Defendant Southwest Credit Systems, L.P. (“Southwest”), is a Hurt business entity with an address of 4120 International Parkway, #1100, Carrollton, Texas 75007, operating as a collection agency, and is a “debt collector” as the term is defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6) and is a “person” as defined by 47 U.S.C. § 153(10).

6. Does 1-10 (the “Collectors”) are individual collectors employed by Southwest and whose identities are currently unknown to the Plaintiff. One or more of the Collectors may be joined as parties once their identities are disclosed through discovery.

7. Southwest at all times acted by and through one or more of the Collectors.

ALLEGATIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL COUNTS

A. The Debt

8. The Plaintiff allegedly incurred a financial obligation in the approximate amount of \$90.00 (the “Debt”) to Comcast (the “Creditor”).

9. The Debt arose from services provided by the Creditor which were primarily for family, personal or household purposes and which meets the definition of a “debt” under 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(5).

10. The Debt was purchased, assigned or transferred to Southwest for collection, or Southwest was employed by the Creditor to collect the Debt.

11. The Defendants attempted to collect the Debt and, as such, engaged in “communications” as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(2).

B. Southwest Engages in Harassment and Abusive Tactics

12. In or around October 2012, Southwest started calling Plaintiff in an attempt to collect the Debt.

13. During the initial conversation, Plaintiff informed Southwest that he was unemployed and unable to pay the Debt at that time. Plaintiff advised Southwest that he would

contact them as soon as he had sufficient funds to repay the Debt and instructed Southwest to cease placing calls to him.

14. Despite having been informed of such, Southwest continued dialing Plaintiff's cellular number twice per day, three to four days per week for successive weeks with intention to annoy and harass Plaintiff.

15. Defendants violated 940 CMR 7.04(f) by initiating a communication with any debtor via telephone, either in person or via text messaging or recorded audio message, in excess of two such communications in each seven-day period to either the debtor's residence, cellular telephone, or other telephone number provided by the debtor as his/her personal telephone number and two such communications in each 30-day period other than at a debtor's residence, cellular telephone, or other telephone number provided by the debtor as his/her personal telephone number, for each debt, provided that for purposes of this section, a creditor may treat any billing address of the debtor as his place of residence. A violation of Massachusetts Regulations constitutes a violation of the FDCPA.

16. On one occasion, Southwest called Plaintiff before 8 a.m.

17. During several conversations, Southwest proceeded to lecture Plaintiff how to be more responsible and how to pay his bills, causing Plaintiff to feel oppressed and frustrated.

18. Other times, Southwest spoke with Plaintiff in a loud and aggressive manner in an effort to intimidate Plaintiff into making an immediate payment.

C. Plaintiff Suffered Actual Damages

19. The Plaintiff has suffered and continues to suffer actual damages as a result of the Defendants' unlawful conduct.

20. As a direct consequence of the Defendants' acts, practices and conduct, the Plaintiff suffered and continues to suffer from humiliation, anger, anxiety, emotional distress, fear, frustration and embarrassment.

21. The Defendants' conduct was so outrageous in character, and so extreme in degree, as to go beyond all possible bounds of decency, and to be regarded as atrocious, and utterly intolerable in a civilized community.

COUNT I
VIOLATIONS OF THE FDCPA 15 U.S.C. § 1692, et seq.

22. The Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully stated herein.

23. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692c(a)(1) in that Defendants contacted the Plaintiff before 8:00 a.m. and after 9:00 p.m.

24. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692d in that Defendants (1) violated Massachusetts regulations pertaining to the frequency of calls to debtors and (2) engaged in behavior the natural consequence of which was to harass, oppress, or abuse the Plaintiff in connection with the collection of a debt.

25. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692d(5) in that Defendants caused a phone to ring repeatedly and engaged the Plaintiff in telephone conversations, with the intent to annoy and harass.

26. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692f in that Defendants used unfair and unconscionable means to collect a debt.

27. The foregoing acts and omissions of the Defendants constitute numerous and multiple violations of the FDCPA, including every one of the above-cited provisions.

28. The Plaintiff is entitled to damages as a result of Defendants' violations.

COUNT II
VIOLATIONS OF THE TELEPHONE CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT –
47 U.S.C. § 227, et seq.

29. The Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully stated herein.

30. At all times mentioned herein, Defendant contacted Plaintiff on his cellular telephone using an automated telephone dialing system (“ATDS”) and/or by using artificial or pre-recorded messages in violation 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1)(A)(iii).

31. When Plaintiff answered the calls from Defendant, he often times heard an artificial and/or pre-recorded message from Defendant.

32. The telephone number called by Defendant was assigned to a cellular telephone service for which Plaintiff incurs charges for incoming calls pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1).

33. The calls from Defendant to Plaintiff were not placed for “emergency purposes” as defined by 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1)(A)(i).

34. Defendant at one time obtained prior express consent to place calls to Plaintiff’s cellular telephone number, however it no longer had consent to call Plaintiff after being repeatedly instructed by Plaintiff to cease all calls to him.

35. Each of the aforementioned calls made by Defendant constitutes a negligent or intentional violation of the TCPA, including each of the aforementioned provisions of 47 U.S.C. § 227, *et. seq.*

36. As a result of each of Defendant’s negligent violations of the TCPA, Plaintiff is entitled to an award of \$500.00 in statutory damages for each call in violation of the TCPA pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(B).

37. As a result of each of Defendant's knowing and/or willful violations of the TCPA, Plaintiff is entitled to an award of treble damages in an amount up to \$1,500.00 for each and every violation of the TCPA pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(B) and 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(C).

COUNT III
INVASION OF PRIVACY BY INTRUSION UPON SECLUSION

38. The Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully stated herein.

39. The Restatement of Torts, Second, § 652(b) defines intrusion upon seclusion as, "One who intentionally intrudes...upon the solitude or seclusion of another, or his private affairs or concerns, is subject to liability to the other for invasion of privacy, if the intrusion would be highly offensive to a reasonable person."

40. Massachusetts further recognizes the Plaintiff's right to be free from invasions of privacy, thus Defendant violated Massachusetts state law.

41. The Defendant intentionally intruded upon Plaintiff's right to privacy by continually harassing the Plaintiff with the above referenced telephone calls.

42. The telephone calls made by Defendant to the Plaintiff were so persistent and repeated with such frequency as to be considered, "hounding the plaintiff," and, "a substantial burden to her existence," thus satisfying the Restatement of Torts, Second, § 652(b) requirement for an invasion of privacy.

43. The conduct of the Defendant in engaging in the illegal collection activities resulted in multiple invasions of privacy in such a way as would be considered highly offensive to a reasonable person.

44. As a result of the intrusions and invasions, the Plaintiff is entitled to actual damages in an amount to be determined at trial from Defendant.

45. All acts of Defendant and its agents were committed with malice, intent, wantonness, and recklessness, and as such, Defendant is subject to punitive damages.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff prays that judgment be entered against Defendants:

1. Actual damages pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(1) against Defendants;
2. Statutory damages of \$1,000.00 pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(2)(A) against Defendants;
3. Costs of litigation and reasonable attorney's fees pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(3) against Defendants;
4. Statutory damages pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(B) & (C);
5. Actual damages from Defendants for the all damages including emotional distress suffered as a result of the intentional, reckless, and/or negligent FDCPA violations and intentional, reckless, and/or negligent invasions of privacy in an amount to be determined at trial for the Plaintiff;
6. Punitive damages; and
7. Such other and further relief as may be just and proper.

TRIAL BY JURY DEMANDED ON ALL COUNTS

Dated: February 11, 2013

Respectfully submitted,

By /s/ Sergei Lemberg
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